

MARY TODD LINCOLN  
HOME LEXINGTON, KY.

DRAWER 2 MARY TODD - YOUTH

71 2004.185 04.18



# Mary Todd Lincoln

## Mary Todd Lincoln Home

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the  
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

# LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor  
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 892

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

May 13, 1946

## MARY LINCOLN'S KENTUCKY HOME

The editor of Lincoln Lore recently received a letter from the secretary of the Detroit Lincoln Group commenting on the probable demolition of the Mary Todd Lincoln Kentucky Home at Lexington. In this letter he states "the house is about to be razed to make room for a gas station. Five or six thousand dollars would save it." He further comments, "I am bringing up the matter in our group and trying to start something in the way of a fund to save the situation. Don't you feel that it would be a worthy project if all groups might get together and do something about saving this landmark?"

Mary Todd was not born in the house at 574 West Main Street, Lexington, but lived there from early childhood until she moved to Springfield, Illinois, in 1839 to make her home with her sister, Mrs. Edwards. Although the building has been somewhat disfigured by the setting apart of some space on the first floor for a store room, the building could yet be restored to its original form.

Twenty-five years ago the Chicago Evening Post displayed a picture of the Todd home supplemented with this statement: "A group of public-spirited citizens of Lexington is planning to purchase the old structure and use it as a museum for Lincoln relics owned in Lexington and as a memorial to her."

Later in 1921 the Washington Star referring to the same project stated "An option has been obtained on the property and civic and historical clubs have become interested in the purchase, either by local subscription or a nation-wide appeal."

In January, 1922, the Illionis State Register carried a story about the anticipated memorial stating that "several of the civic clubs of Lexington among them the Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Pyramid and Optimist Clubs have newly adopted resolutions favoring the purchase and the conversion of the home into a historic shrine and museum."

Nothing ever came of these projects with the possible exception that they may have encouraged the Pyramid Club of Lexington to place a tablet on the outside wall of the building giving a brief sketch of the structure's history.

An article by J. Frank Dunn appearing in the Lexington Herald for January 30, 1936, again called attention to the neglected condition of the structure as the store room of the building was then vacant. Mr. Dunn observed "what doubtless would be preserved as a national shrine if located elsewhere, instead of being an abandoned grocery and a public boarding house, stands on West Main Street in Lexington to remind busy Lexingtonians of other delinquency—The Mary Todd House."

On several different occasions the writer has attempted to renew interest in the project by preparing mographs and by arranging for interviews and public addresses in

Lexington. In 1939 Mrs. Golden was in possession of the building and she was advised to charge a small entrance admission and utilize the store room as an antique and souvenir shop until such a time as she might be able to interest historical groups in purchasing the house.

About 1932 there was some new activity evident in the memorial property and an option on the house was again secured but the price was prohibitive so the matter was dropped. The house was later sold at a nominal figure to a man who wished to use it for commercial purposes which brought a protest from the colored church on the opposite corner. The church stands on the same lot for which Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln and others conveyed the property to the grantee on June 18, 1856, to settle the estate of Robert S. Todd.

Another visit to Lexington in March, 1942, allowed the writer to make a public appeal to a luncheon club group and to interview members of the Chamber of Commerce with respect to the importance of preserving the Todd House. A group of women became interested in the project at this time and received a more reasonable proposition from the owner than had been submitted to former groups, allowing a period of five years to pay for it. Later in the same year when the 100th anniversary of the wedding date of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd drew near the writer prepared a manuscript on the Lincoln-Todd wedding which was printed in the Lexington Leader for November 1, 1942.

This article may have been partly responsible one month later for the purchase of the property by Sterling D. Coke who according to information from J. Frank Dunn, "would preserve it to be made an historical shrine after the war." On January 7, 1943, the editor of Lincoln Lore wrote a letter to Mr. Coke congratulating him on the fine accomplishment of preserving the house in which Kentucky's most famous woman lived.

As late as 1944 the writer again visiting Lexington, both in public and in private emphasized the importance of preserving the building and attempted to get a personal interview with Mr. Coke about the status of the project, but he was absent from the city so not available.

Now comes the letter already mentioned, from Mr. Heber of Detroit who has returned from Lexington with information from Mr. William H. Townsend, a well known Lincoln student of that city, stating that it now appears as if the Todd home is to be sacrificed to make room for a filling station. If any further organized effort to save the property is to be made it must be done at once. Even now the building may be in the process of being razed, but it has passed successfully through so many crises one hopes that even yet there is time to save the structure for memorial purposes.

Note. "See the June, 1946, issue of the Filson Club Quarterly for an article on the education of Mary Todd Lincoln and the cultured atmosphere she was able to create in her Springfield home."



# Lincoln Lore

September, 1977

Bulletin of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. Mark E. Neely, Jr., Editor. Published each month by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46801.

Number 1675

## TWO NEW LINCOLN SITES . . . MAYBE

America's continuing interest in Abraham Lincoln is a phenomenon most evident on a broadly popular level. There may well be less research in progress on Lincoln manuscripts and books than there was two or three decades ago. Real action is taking place, however, where masses of Americans look increasingly for their contacts with history, at historical sites. The National Park Service initiated a long-range program to improve the Lincoln home site in Springfield, Illinois, some years back. There is a large project under way to upgrade the interpretative material at other Lincoln sites in

Illinois as well. A new site in Kentucky was dedicated just this year, and people in Vermont, of all places, are at work to save another Lincoln-related historical site.

The newest addition is the Mary Todd Lincoln House in Lexington, Kentucky, dedicated on June ninth of this year. Like all such events, this dedication was the result of considerable struggle over a substantial period in the past. More than seven years ago, Mrs. Louis B. Nunn, wife of the governor of Kentucky at that time, visited the historic brick house in which Mary Todd spent her girlhood years. The wives of the



*From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum*

FIGURE 1. The Mary Todd Lincoln house on Main Street in Lexington, Kentucky.



FIGURE 2. Much of the Todd home is restored to the period 1832 - 1849, the time of Robert Smith Todd's residence there. This parlor contains the painted portrait of Robert Smith Todd. The couches are copies of furniture used by Mary Todd and Abraham Lincoln in the White House.

From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

governors of Indiana and Illinois were coming for a visit and had expressed an interest in seeing the house. Mrs. Nunn was shocked to find that the Todd house was a tumbledown warehouse for plumbing supplies.

The house had survived many close calls in the past. As early as 1921, civic and historical groups in Lexington showed interest in using the house for a museum. After a year's efforts, however, the only accomplishment was the placement of a tablet on the outside of the building describing its history. Occasional newspaper articles on the sad plight of the house sparked little interest. A proposal to use it for commercial pur-

poses in 1932 did prompt a protest from a black church across the street. Louis A. Warren, the first editor of *Lincoln Lore*, made several attempts in the 1940s to interest Lexington citizens in converting the home into an historic site, but in 1946, the house was nearly razed to make room for a gas station.

The home was a victim of forces of which we have only recently become aware. Before the era of woman's liberation, it was not easy to arouse enthusiasm for a *girlhood* home. Indeed, the Kentucky Mansions Preservation Foundation touts the home as "the first shrine to honor an American First Lady." C. Frank Dunn, a local Lexington historian who was

FIGURE 3. The master bedroom in the Todd house is furnished with pieces made in Winchester, Kentucky, in the early part of the nineteenth century. Knowledge of the type of carpet used in the room came from the 1849 inventory of the Robert Smith Todd estate.



From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

interested in saving the house in 1949, wrote Louis Warren to tell him that it would never work to save the home "to glorify womanhood." It could only succeed as an essentially Lincoln-related memorial.

Dunn pointed to other problems. He did not feel that any prominent woman in Lexington would lead a campaign to save the Todd house. For one thing, the home was a notorious house of ill fame in some of the years after it passed out of Todd family hands. For another, most of the leaders of Lexington society were Confederate descendants. Despite the fact that the state did not secede, Lincoln's policies on race drove Kentucky sentiment into the camp of the Solid South after the war was over, and there that sentiment remained as late as 1949. A further problem was the extremely poor condition of the house. At that time, it seemed "utterly impossible to restore the place."

The Todd home went through the various stages of decay that properties on the slide go through. The original family left, and the occupants became people without a permanent home. From a rooming house, it became a place where people went just for an evening. From a saloon, it became a place occupied more by objects than people, a used-furniture store. At last, it became a place occupied only by objects, a warehouse.

Mrs. Nunn organized the Kentucky Mansions Preservation Foundation in 1969 to renovate the Executive Mansion in Frankfort. The organization restored White Hall, the home of Lincoln's minister to Russia, antislavery maverick Cassius M. Clay. The Foundation also took an interest in the Todd home, but the conversion of that home to a public historic site would not be accomplished without a final struggle.

The Kentucky Federation of Women's Clubs raised \$26,500, the appraised value of the house. Governor Nunn provided \$100,000 in state money from a contingency fund. The Department of Housing and Urban Development included the block on which the Todd home was situated in a Lexington urban renewal tract. In 1971, the Commonwealth of Kentucky bought the tract, but a long legal battle ensued. The owners contested the state's ability to condemn the property on the basis of the value of that piece of property alone without considering its value in conjunction with surrounding properties. In 1973, the Kentucky Court of Appeals upheld a Fayette Circuit Court ruling that the state could condemn the property without considering the value of the adjacent property.

Actual restoration of the property could not begin until 1976. Governor Julian Carroll's administration provided \$465,000 to restore the house and purchase furnishings. The governor and his wife also made unused Executive Mansion furniture available for use in the Todd home. The feat was at last accomplished.

The house was built in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Robert Smith Todd purchased the house in 1832, when his daughter Mary was already fourteen years old. She lived in the home until she left for Springfield in 1839; her father lived there until his death in 1849. While he lived in the house, Robert Todd was clerk of the Kentucky House of Representatives, was elected to the Kentucky Senate, and was president of the Lexington branch of the Bank of Kentucky. The family gained substantial income from a grocery establishment.

Of course, the original furnishings of the Todd home have not survived. When Robert Todd died in 1849, his estate was offered for sale and was scattered far and wide. The inventory of the estate made for that sale survives, however, and from that inventory it was possible to make an educated guess at the furnishings of the house. The twenty-room brick house contains a rare portrait of Robert Todd and draperies copied from a surviving swatch from the original parlor. The home is open to visitors from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday, and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday.

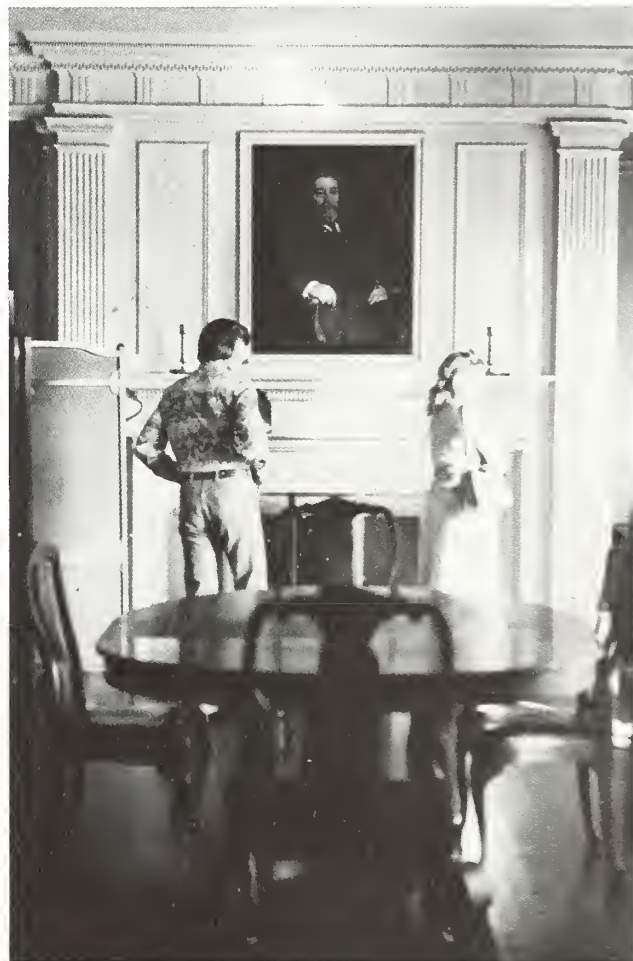
The name of Robert Todd figures prominently in the struggle which is presently going on to save Hildene, a mansion in Manchester, Vermont. It was the home of Robert Todd Lincoln, the only son of Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln to live to maturity. Robert first visited Manchester on a vacation to escape the heat of a Washington summer during the Civil War. He visited the area repeatedly after the war and was especially fond of the summer home his law partner, Edward Swift Isham, kept in the area. In 1902, now wealthy and successful, Robert Todd Lincoln purchased several hundred acres in Manchester. In 1904, Hildene was built and remained in the family's hands until the death of Robert's granddaughter, Mary Lincoln Beckwith, in 1975. Her will left the 412-acre estate to the Christian Science Church with the wish that it be preserved as a memorial to her grandparents. However, the will contains an escape clause allowing the church to

sell the estate if it is "impractical" to run the estate as an historical memorial.

The position of the Christian Science Church is simple. They consider themselves, according to Mr. Carl B. Rechner, Real Estate Consultant at the Christian Science Center in Boston, a "small but international church." They are not equipped to run historical memorials, and that is an enterprise which does not particularly fit their mainly religious objectives. They wish to follow the spirit of the will and will sell the property to any group which will operate the property as a memorial to the Lincolns. However, the property was appraised at \$612,000, and no group which wishes to operate the home as an historic property has that kind of money. Mr. Rechner said that the church offered to sell for \$400,000 and to "make terms" that would ease even that burden, but their offer has not been taken. They have been offered, \$200,000, which they refused. They feel that, if no group prepared to manage the property as a memorial offers to buy it for a reasonable price, that they are then free to sell to any other buyer for the next best use.

The Friends of Hildene, Inc., a group of over one hundred Manchester citizens anxious to save the mansion for historical purposes, is long on sentiment for the project and, understandably, short on funds. One major gift, says FOH president Robert Schmid, allowed them to make the \$200,000 offer. Since negotiations to close the gap between that and the church's figure have broken down, that offer has been withdrawn. The Friends of Hildene think that they have an excellent chance to save the estate through the courts. "News from the Friends of Hildene," a bulletin published by the organization, stated their case this way in April:

The FOH stand, buttressed by legal precedent and authority, is that the Church has not shown — and has made no good faith effort to establish — that to run Hildene as directed in the Will would be "impractical." Therefore,



From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 4. Robert Todd Lincoln's portrait in the dining room of Hildene.

having failed to establish "impracticality," the Church is not free to sell the estate except to a buyer who will honor Miss Beckwith's memorial concept. In FOH's view "impracticality" *might* have been argued if the Beckwith Will had left no money to the Church as operating capital for the maintenance of a Hildene memorial. But the Will provides a specific fund of \$425,000. as endowment for this memorial purpose as well as "all the rest, residue, and remainder" of the estate after taxes and expenses have been paid. Thus, with . . . working capital and with full title to the land and buildings, . . . the Church must present convincing evidence — which has not been forthcoming — that it is "impractical" to maintain Hildene as a memorial.

The \$425,000 endowment was a fund set aside in Miss Beckwith's will for her servants. The servants are all deceased now, and in that contingency the money and the "rest and residue" of the estate after settlement were to go to the operation of the memorial. Mr. Schmid estimates the amount available for this purpose now at \$780,000 in cash, stocks, and bonds. A court fight is in the offing, the Church petitioning the courts for permission to sell Hildene on the open market and the Friends of Hildene "determined to prevent, by all legal means, the diversion of these resources from their intended purpose."

Hildene has been nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places by the Vermont State Division for Historic Preservation, which described it as a "magnificent example of Georgian revival architecture." Miss Kathryn Welch, planning officer for the Boston regional office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation noted:

The estate contains a multiplicity of artifacts, memorabilia, and archival materials, which would be of historical significance. Resources such as the papers and correspondence of Robert Todd Lincoln and the Lincoln-Beckwith families as well as the collection of artifacts should be evaluated for their content and significance relative to U.S. history, the history of the Lincoln-Beckwith family, and the more local history of the estate and the town of Manchester.

The home is in good physical condition, and Mr. Schmid says that the furnishings in the home are mostly the ones Robert Todd Lincoln acquired for it. Miss Beckwith, known locally as "Peg," lived in the house as it had been set up by her grand-

father. She bought very few furnishings herself. Some of the furnishings, however, go to Robert Todd Lincoln Beckwith, Miss Beckwith's brother, and he is currently distributing some of the items. Friends of Hildene have contacted him, however, and he has apparently agreed to leave certain very important pieces, like the grandfather clock, in the home.

When I asked Mr. Rechner for a description of the Church's position, he gave me in essence the position I described as the Church's above. He did not mention the endowment fund on which the Friends of Hildene place so much emphasis. Wanting to clarify the matter, I called the Church's associate counsel, Mr. Philip Hunt. He expressed some reluctance to discuss a matter of litigation at first, but he did consent to discuss the will a bit. The "so-called endowment" fund is "in there," he said, as a trust which was never set up because all the potential beneficiaries were deceased before they could benefit from it. Mr. Hunt's position is that, "endowment" fund or no, the whole question hinges on "the degree of discretion" Miss Beckwith desired the directors of the Church to have. The courts, he said, will look at the critical words in the will, which state that in the event the directors should determine the historical memorial purpose impractical, they could use the property to further the ends of religion as taught by Mary Baker Eddy. The will states that it is Miss Beckwith's "desire," but she does "not direct" that it be used for the historical purpose. She could have directed them to do so and left the property to someone else in the event that they did not wish to do so. The courts will have to interpret whether it is entirely up to the directors of the Church to decide the question of practicality. In the meantime, Lincoln enthusiasts will have to wait and watch anxiously or hope that some benefactor can close the gap between the Church's price for the property and the funds raised by the Friends of Hildene.

*Editor's Note:* Readers of the credits for photographs in recent issues will have noted the appearance of the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum. This is the new name for the Lincoln National Life Foundation. A future issue will deal with the renaming of the Foundation in honor of its first director and with the move of the facility to brand new quarters.

M. E. N., Jr.



From the Louis A. Warren  
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 5. Main entrance of Hildene.

# Is she the Lincoln they remember?

By Kathleen Brady  
Christian Science Monitor

In her hometown, Lexington, Ky., Mary Todd Lincoln is regarded as having been an intelligent, genteel woman who led a difficult life alongside the 16th President of the Union. While many others think she was a bit of a shrew who hounded her husband, perhaps the hometown view will be vindicated with the discovery last year of a cache of Lincoln family papers at Robert Todd Lincoln's home in Vermont.

Paul Beaver, historian at the Lincoln College Museum in Lincoln, Ill., says that one of the first discoveries from these papers is that Mary Todd's father did have faith in the political future of his son-in-law and did not regard him as a country bumpkin.

Mary was born Dec. 13, 1818, to Robert S. Todd, landholder, importer, bank president and politician. Her mother, Eliza Ann Parker, died when Mary was 6, and two years later her father married a woman the

girl was never close to and began a second family. He moved his brood away from Mary's maternal grandmother to 578 Main st., which is now the Mary Todd Lincoln House.

If her girlhood was not especially happy, it was social. On a visit to a sister in Springfield, Ill., she met the eligible lawyer Abraham Lincoln, nine years her senior, became engaged to him, broke it off, but eventually married him. Lincoln was often away from home riding the court circuit and becoming engrossed in politics, as her father had been, and while they were living in Springfield, their son Edward died.

Whatever she was like in Illinois, as the President's wife in Washington she had one foible, documented by hundreds of retail receipts — she would go to downtown stores and buy countless pairs of white gloves. By the time her husband was killed, she had one friend in the capital, a seamstress. She had incurred



MARY TODD LINCOLN  
Genteel or shrewish?

## They remember Lincoln, Mary Todd that is

### ■ LINCOLN

Continued from Page 1

like of Lincoln's law partner, William Herndon, who later became Lincoln's biographer. Scholars suspect that he overdramatized the 16th President's friendly feelings for Ann Rutledge, the fiancée of his business partner, and began a sentimental legend simply to hurt Mary Todd Lincoln.

Whatever his romantic deficiencies, Lincoln did marry Mary Todd, and the house at 578 Main st. is the mansion that's open to the public. In 1977, the citizens of the commonwealth combined to take over the Lincoln mansion when it was being used as a warehouse and restored it to Georgian splendor. Seven Federated Women's Clubs, schoolchildren and private citizens who donated furnishings, and the Kentucky Mansion Preservations Foundation spent a decade and their own money on the project.

When Robert Todd lived there with his brood of 14 children, the brick house had 20 rooms and sat on 32 acres. There was a formal garden and a stream in the back, a coach house, stables and a staff of slaves.

While the furniture is not original to the house, the mood of the day was recreated with the help of a sale inventory dating from the time of Robert Todd's death and early records serving as guides. Inside the house, one is transported to the Victorian era. One of the twin parlors contains a Brussels carpet in floral pattern, a Meissen lamp, books and portraits of Mary Todd and her father. In the sitting room with its silver tea set and ivory-colored upholstery stands a cherry secretary made in Kentucky in the early 1800s. The one note that was authentically the Todds was the red damask draperies in the rooms, which were reproduced from a swatch saved by one of Mary Todd's half sisters.

The dining room down the hallway features coin silver and china dating from about 1790

that was obtained from the estate of Henrietta Clay, great-granddaughter of the famous orator.

The third story contains interesting artifacts such as Mary Todd Lincoln's memorabilia — her Meissen collection, chocolate pot, and inkwell of crystal and silver — and Robert E. Lee's order to surrender to Union forces and a hand-written letter on ruled paper by Abraham Lincoln, which he headed "Executive Mansion." Ad-

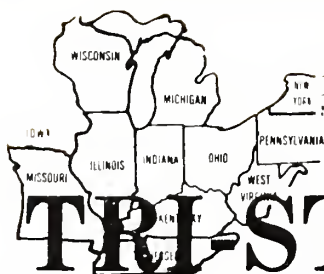
dressed to Major Ramsey, it reads:

"The lady-bearer of this letter has two sons who want to work — Set them at it, if possible — Wanting to work is so rare an event that it should be encouraged.

"Yours truly,  
"A. Lincoln"

Somehow that makes the past seem terribly contemporary.

Boston Globe: February 12, 1982



# IN THIS ISSUE

98 Antique Auctions  
160 Shows & Flea Markets

MORE AUCTIONS & SHOWS IN THE EAST  
CENTRAL STATES THAN ANY OTHER  
PUBLICATION IN THE WORLD

Registered at U.S. Patent Office

Week of Aug. 16-21

64 Pages

ONE YEAR

SUBSCRIPTION \$13.50

Higher for Western States & Foreign  
(Coupon on Page 61)

## NEWSPAPER

SUBSCRIPTION

NEARLY OUT???

CHECK YOUR LABEL!

If your label shows

AUG82 or SEP82

payment is nearly due

News

758856 JUN 3 1982  
MRS. ELEANOR LINCOLN  
201 THREE RIVERS EAST  
FT. WAYNE IN 46802

# TRI-STATE TRADER

(ISSN 0041-2503)

Weekly Antique, Auction & Collectors' Newspaper for Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, western Pa., W. Va., Tenn., Mo., N.Y.

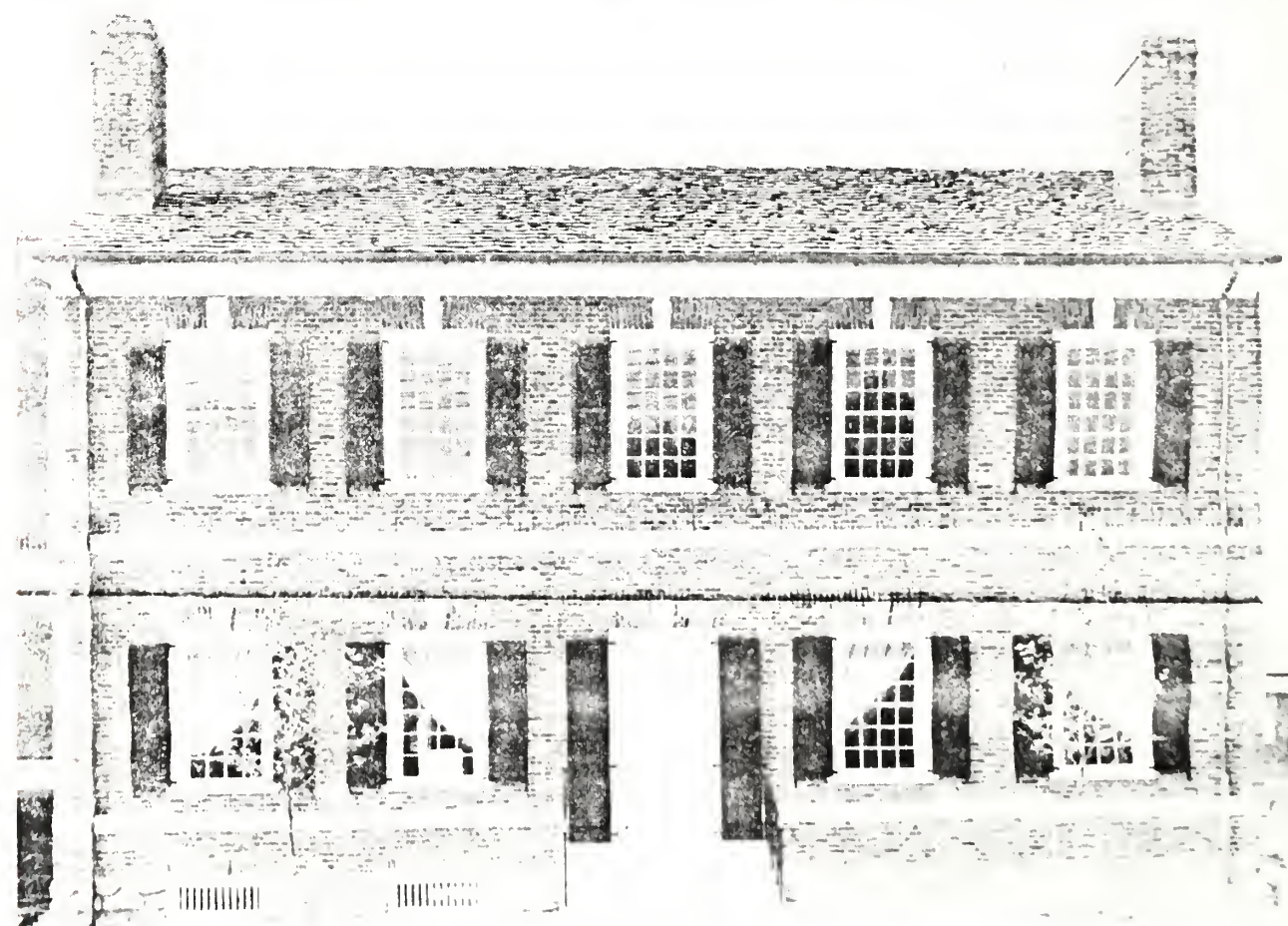
Vol 15 No 20 (Whole 710)

2nd Class Postage Paid at Kiplingstown, Ind. 46148 Phone 317 415 5131

Delivery Mon Aug 16, 1982

Aug 21, 1982

## The House Of Mary Todd Lincoln...



MARY TODD LINCOLN House at Lexington, Ky., was opened to the public in 1977 as the nation's first shrine to a First Lady. Mary Todd's family lived here from 1832 to 1849. She died in 1882 — 100 years ago this year. This

by Glenn Kerfoot

Mary Todd Lincoln left this life in 1882, but 100 years have not been enough time for historians and Lincoln scholars to agree on many aspects of her life and unique personality.

Was she a loving wife and companion or a barbed-tongued shrew who made Abraham Lincoln's life a hell on earth? There is little sound historical evidence one way or the other, and many contemporary researchers accept the idea that the both President and his spouse were a couple of different temperaments but not necessarily unhappy together.

Did she suffer from severe mental problems aggravated by the years of bloody civil war, the death of a son and the assassination of her husband? One

jury declared her insane in May 1875, but a year later a second jury found no evidence of mental illness.

Was she betrayed by her eldest son Robert? Some authorities have advanced the idea that her first insanity trial was merely part of a plot engineered by Robert Lincoln to enhance his political and financial position. Still other experts reject this theory, pointing out that Robert was not displeased at the 1876 reversal.

But no matter what you believe you may have your opinions altered during a visit to the Mary Todd House at Lexington, Ky., which was opened to the public in 1977 as the nation's first shrine to a First Lady.

Americans should be proud of this

20-room brick house was restored by the Kentucky Mansions Preservation Foundation and is currently open to the public.

great lady, but instead they have maligned her," says Todd House curator Lou Holden. "During the Civil War the South called her a traitor and the North called her a spy. President Lincoln's advisors referred to her sarcastically as Mrs. President, and the press crucified her."

"If she wore a low neck dress they called her a hussy. If she wore a high neck dress they called her a prude. When vandals stripped the White House after the President's assassination they blamed Mary. They criticized her parties, her clothing, and her efforts to brighten up the White House. They even denied her a small government pension after she was widowed."

Her husband gave his life trying to

keep the nation united, and like him, she became a martyr. She has been reviled in the history books, described as a martinet and accused of making Mr. Lincoln's life miserable. Here at the Todd House we do our best to set the record straight and tell visitors what kind of a person she really was.

And the curator and her staff do an incredible job. Visitors learn that Mary Todd was vivacious, precocious and better educated than most of the men Lincoln dealt with, men who were jealous of her 13 years of formal education and her influence with the President. They learn about her tragic life, her anguish at her husband's assassination, the death of her three children and the

(continued on page 45)

Aug. 21-22

Sept. 18-19

Oct. 23-24

## SPRINGFIELD, OHIO ANTIQUE SHOW & FLEA MARKET

Aug. 21-22

Clark Co. Frgds

500 ft. W. of Exit 59 off I-70

9 AM to 6 PM

KNIGHT MAGILL MANAGERS

300 400 Dealers

513 399 2261

A Buyer's Paradise!

Inside & Outside

Nov 13-14

Dec 4-5

## The House . . .

(continued from page 1)

bitterness of seeing her family divided by the war.

According to Ms. Holden, a tour of the Todd House is not just a pilgrimage to a historic home but a brief glimpse into the life and times of one of history's most unusual females.

Built in 1800 by William Palmateer, a veteran of the Revolution, the three-story, 14-room Georgian brick town house was originally an inn. It was sold in 1829 to Robert Todd, a wealthy banker, merchant, politician and father of Mary. She was destined to become the bride of Abraham Lincoln 13 years later.

Lincoln, at the time a recently elected Illinois congressman on his way to Washington, stayed in the house for three weeks in the fall of 1847. Two years later he again spent three weeks there while settling the Todd estate after the death of Mary's father. In February, 1850, he made a third visit to Lexington for the funeral of Mary's beloved Grandmother Parker.

During the century following its sale after the death of Todd, the house was used as a residence, a brothel, a liquor

store, a dry cleaning plant, a grocery store and a warehouse. By the 1960's, with a massive urban renewal program underway, the future of the old structure was uncertain and there was some talk of its demolition. But, while aged buildings went down on all sides, the Todd House remained standing.

In 1969 the property was condemned and appraised at \$26,500. Mrs. Beula Nunn, wife of then Governor Louie Nunn, spearheaded a drive to raise funds for purchase. When the contributions of women's clubs throughout Kentucky were added up, they totaled more than \$38,000, and in 1971 Governor Nunn added another \$100,000 from his contingency fund.

Mrs. Nunn's interest in the property dated from a visit with the wives of the governors of Indiana and Illinois. "They were bragging about their Lincoln historic sites and mentioned that they were eager to see the Mary Todd home in Lexington," Mrs. Nunn recalls. "I had never seen it so I decided to have a look. When I did I was shocked at its shameful condition. I didn't want anyone to see how it had been neglected."

In 1971, at Mrs. Nunn's urging, the State of Kentucky prepared to purchase the property, but the owners refused to sell, precipitating a legal battle which threatened to drag on for years. In June, 1971, when condemnation proceedings were filed, it was rumored that the state would dismantle the house, store the pieces and ultimately re-erect

Tri-State Trader — August 21, 1982 — 45

it near the Kentucky Life Museum on the outskirts of Lexington. This plan aroused a storm of protest from restoration groups, Lincoln buffs and historical societies.

The Lexington Automobile Club and the Chamber of Commerce passed resolutions demanding that the plan be (continued on page 64)



**Large  
Antique Auction**

ODD & CURIGUS  
ANTIQUE AUCTION CO.  
101 W. High St.  
**Redkey, Ind.**

20 mi. N.E. of MUNCIE — 50 mi. S. of FT. WAYNE — 20 mi. from the Ohio Line

**SAT., AUGUST 21 - 5:00 pm**

PLEASE NOTE: We will be celebrating "Gas Boom Day" in Redkey, August 21st and 22nd. We have over 30 dealers setting up in the flea market in front of the auction house. We encourage you to come early and plan to stay late at the auction as we will have many small items to sell along with many nice pieces of

**The Mary Todd Lincoln home**  
on Lexington's main street will  
be preserved as the home that  
Lincoln and his wife knew, ac-  
cording to plans of the new own-  
er, W. J. Wilson, of this city. Mr.  
Wilson recently acquired the his-  
toric residence from Mrs. S.  
Golden.

---



